

# Burke School District 26-2

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April 14, 2020

Burke School Families,

I want to reach out to you to touch base on a few items, as we now know more about how the rest of our school year is going to look. First of all, Burke Schools, like the rest of the schools in South Dakota, will be closed through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Our last official day of school will be May 27, 2020. We are continuing our distance learning opportunities for students with a few tweaks. I will outline those below.

- First, all of our teachers are putting together “packets” of assignments for the rest of the school year and rolling those out to students by the end of next week. The packets may be electronic or they may be a packet that gets mailed out to households, depending on teacher preference. Each teacher’s page on the burke.k12.sd.us website will outline that teacher’s plan for completing the year.
- We do not have the authority to shorten our school calendar. The legislature has authorized the Secretary of Education to waive the minimum number of instructional minutes, but Secretary Jones has told schools that they should plan to continue flex learning until the end of their scheduled calendars and that he does not intend to waive the minutes at this time. As a local school district, we can control the amount of content that we deliver between now and May 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Although school is in session for Burke until May 27<sup>th</sup>, students will have the opportunity to work ahead and complete their graded work early.
- We hope that showing students the finish line with the amount of work they have to do will help to motivate reluctant learners to get the work done. We are trying to encourage people who might be overwhelmed by another 7 weeks of flex learning.
- Students and parents wanting to pick up belongings or clean out lockers can do that from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on April 15, 16, 17, 20 or 21. We ask that only one person per family come into the school and that it is a quick trip. We ask that no more than 6 people are in the building at a time, and that people wait outside if there are already 6 in the building.
- We are encouraging teachers to continue meeting with their students on a regular basis to review material and touch base with students up until May 27<sup>th</sup>. Individual teachers will decide the frequency and will have instructions for their class meetings.
- Our number one goal is to make meaningful learning manageable for all of our students as we work to complete our school year.

I will quote a few lines from guidance that came from the South Dakota Department of Education regarding the awarding of grades and credit during this time. *“When determining policies around credit and grades during the COVID-19 closures, know that students may be experiencing varying mental and physical health challenges and may have very different access to supports and technology at home. No student should be negatively impacted by the closure for factors outside of the student’s control; furthermore, school district policies and procedures should not widen the opportunity gap.”* As a district we are working to balance meaningful fourth quarter instruction with the imperative of not overwhelming students and families. During these trying times we will error on the side of demanding too little, rather than having some of our students lost along the way and creating a larger opportunity gap for many of our students.

If you have any questions, you may call the school at (605) 775-2644.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erik Person', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erik Person, Superintendent